

**Closing Remarks by Chargé d’Affaires Keith Gilges**  
**Opening Remarks at the Covering Elections in Trinidad and Tobago**  
**Workshop**  
**Briar Place Conference Room, March 9 09:00**

Darren Lee Sing, President of the TTPBA...

Clive Bacchus, President of the ACM...

Distinguished visitors, friends and colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, members of the press...

Good morning.

I would like to welcome you all to Public Affairs Annex of the U.S. Embassy. We are very happy to host this event, along with our partners the Trinidad and Tobago Publishers and Broadcasters Association and the Association of Caribbean Media Workers.

I am a faithful consumer of the local press. I devour the local papers every day, watch the TV news broadcasts, and listen to talk radio. I enjoy following the ebb and flow of developing stories, the sparring between political combatants that occupies so many column inches, and the joyful bacchanal during Carnival and other festivals.

So I’m glad you’re here. What you are going to discuss over the next couple days is important. A free and responsible press is essential to ensuring that elections are conducted in a manner consistent with democratic values.

The press in Trinidad and Tobago is free. There's no question about that. But, I ask you, is it always responsible? That's a question you will ask yourselves over the next couple days. It's a question every journalist should be asking him or herself every day, as you chase a lead, craft your text, and file your story.

Journalists must always strive to honor codes of conduct. Some of these rules are clear and easy to observe. Other rules are sometimes only recognized when they have been broken. When someone has gone too far...

Yours is a public service. You uncover wrongdoing and investigate malfeasance. You give voice to the powerless, and a pulpit to the powerful.

At the same time, it is also your responsibility to ensure that you don't put people in danger needlessly. Do you publish the names of victims of domestic violence or trafficking? Or the names of officers of the law working to protect citizens and solve crimes?

Do you publish leaks without seeking corroboration? Do we reveal details of a criminal investigation that might hurt its eventual prosecution?

These are just some of the ethical challenges that journalists face every day. There are no easy answers, but just as you pose questions of others to build your stories, do you also ask questions of yourself about what you should publish?

To help you work toward some answers, we are very happy to have someone with us who has made a career out of journalistic ethics--balancing the need to know and the right to protect.

Our guest speaker today is Mr. Patrick Butler, the vice president of the International Center for Journalists. After working as a reporter and editor on several U.S. newspapers, he now oversees the development of ICFJ programs. Mr. Butler is here thanks to a grant from the International Information Programs bureau of the U.S. Department of State.

Please join me in welcoming Mr. Patrick Butler...